



February 25, 2014

Good Evening and Welcome to Education in Burnaby

We begin by acknowledging and thanking the Coast Salish Nations of Musqueam, Tsleil-Waututh and Squamish on whose traditional territories we teach, learn, and live.

Today is the eve of Bullying Awareness Day in BC. The origins of this day go back to 2007, when two students from Nova Scotia bought and distributed pink shirts in their school in support of a fellow male student who was bullied for wearing a pink shirt. This started a tradition of raising not only awareness, but action against bullying. The co-founder of Pink Shirt Day, Travis Price, is in the Lower Mainland this week sharing his story. We had the great pleasure of meeting Travis last evening when he spoke to Burnaby parents, and were inspired by his compelling story. He will be presenting to many of our students this week.

In Burnaby Schools every day is bullying awareness day where we celebrate the richness of culture and diversity and nurture empathy, tolerance, respect and kindness to create a desire in every child to make a difference.

We see it in the hallways of our elementary schools with their Trees of Gratitude, in the 20 Roots of Empathy classrooms where babies are the teachers, or at the students celebrating their True Colours at Gilmore, and in our secondary schools Rebels wear pink, Mountain students cover their lockers with random sticky notes of kindness, and Byrne Creek students to raise funds for their LG BTQ club. And each year,

students represent the Burnaby School District at the United Nations.

Provincially, Burnaby students are also active. This week, twenty-nine students from join students from throughout the

province at an ERASE student forum. Representing our district, they will share their ideas on what they consider to be the most effective ways to prevent bullying. We will look forward to hearing the outcome of this forum.